

**Cher L. King, Ph.D.**  
Licensed Psychologist

Phone 801-726-7772  
Email dr.king@comcast.net

*Mailing address*  
P. O. Box 102  
Willard, UT 84340

*Office location*  
3544-G Lincoln Avenue  
Ogden, UT 84401

## CHILD CUSTODY/PARENT TIME EVALUATION PROCEDURES AND COSTS

*If you have difficulty reading or understanding this document, please let Dr. King know and plans will be made for this and other documents to be read and explained to you or translated for you.*

### **Procedures**

When Dr. King receives an order appointing her, she will notify the attorneys she has accepted the case. Instructions for completing intake paperwork will be provided. If the court has given Dr. King email addresses for the parties, notice will also be sent to them. Otherwise, parties will need to obtain the instructions from their attorneys.

When the intake paperwork is received from both parties, Dr. King will quote the basic fee for the evaluation. However, parties may be able to estimate the fee using the information provided in this document.

Evaluations are conducted in the order in which the intake paperwork and payment of the basic fee are received. Should Dr. King's forms, procedures, or costs change before these are received, the new procedures and costs will become applicable to the evaluation. Efforts are made to complete the evaluation within 90-120 days, barring unforeseen delays.

The evaluation typically includes:

- administration of questionnaires and interviews to parents;
- interviews with children when their age and maturity permit;
- interviews with other adults living in the home;
- home visits;
- assessment of the status of other children living in the home and observation of those children during home visits;
- investigation into allegations of such concerns as child abuse or neglect, domestic violence, other criminal activity, and substance abuse on the part of the parties or persons who may reside in or frequent the homes; and
- gathering information about relevant community resources when applicable.

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**Basic Fee**

The basic fee is a flat rate based on the number of persons to be examined and is outlined in the table below. The fee is intended to cover the cost of planning data-gathering activities; interviews with key parties and a limited number of collateral witnesses; home visits; review of a limited amount of documents and materials submitted to or requested by Dr. King; preparing findings and recommendations to be orally presented at the custody evaluation (4-903) conference; and the minimum fee for time spent presenting at the conference.

each adult party who is the subject of the evaluation	2,000
each step-parent or partner residing with an adult party	500
each child age four years and younger who is the subject of the evaluation	350
each child age five years and older who is the subject of the evaluation	650
each adult and child living in or frequenting the residences who is not the subject of the evaluation (assuming a more in-depth evaluation is not needed)	350
preparation of outline of findings and recommendation for the custody evaluation conference (4-903 conference) is 20% of the total of the above categories	20% of the total of the above fees
minimum fee for time spent participating in the child custody evaluation conference (see Additional Costs/Appearance below for additional information)	500

**Additional Costs**

Unless otherwise indicated, all additional costs will be charged to parties based on how the court has determined costs should be shared. One party may be more responsible for certain costs because, for example, they have a larger number of adults or children residing in their home who are not the subjects of the evaluation. They may have necessitated pre-evaluation work due to lack of follow through. They may have submitted a greater amount of material to be reviewed or requested that a larger number of collateral witnesses be interviewed. In order to charge parties differentially or disproportionately, an agreement or order will be needed.

***Pre-Evaluation Communications***

Pre-evaluation communications may be required if one or both parties do not submit intake paperwork or pay their fee in a timely manner. Letters to the court, email exchanges, and phone conferences may be needed to sort this out. The time spent by Dr. King engaged in these activities will be billed at \$165 per hour.

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### ***Additional Adults or Children***

After the evaluation begins, if it becomes apparent there are other adults or children who should be examined, those additional persons will be included in the evaluation and the cost will be added.

### ***Testing and Records Requests***

When deemed necessary by Dr. King, the evaluation will also include but may not be limited to:

- psychological testing of adult parties (billed at \$200/hour)

NOTE: Psychological testing of adult parties on general principle is not always useful in custody evaluations. Subjects tend to portray themselves in a favorable light and results may be invalid or only marginally valid. The use of labels, such as clinical diagnoses, is not always useful and can contribute to assumptions being made about parenting capacity based on a diagnosis alone.

- psycho-educational evaluation of children, including such testing as cognitive and achievement testing (billed at \$200/hour)
- drug testing (billed at actual cost for testing plus 20%)
- requests for criminal history reports (paid by parties)
- requests for DCFS records (any fee paid by parties)

### ***Appearances***

Fees for appearing for a deposition, trial, or other subpoenaed appearance will be the responsibility of the party issuing the subpoena. Fees are a minimum of \$500, which covers the cost for up to three hours, and \$165 per hour for each subsequent hour, regardless of whether time is spent testifying or waiting. The minimum fee must be paid prior to the appearance and the balance is due at the time of appearance. Preparation time for subpoenaed appearances will be billed at \$165 per hour.

The minimum fee of \$500 for presenting at the custody evaluation conference (4-903 conference) is included in the basic fee. If more than three hours is required, \$165 per hour for each subsequent hour will be charged. The basic fee also includes a fee for preparation for the conference, so additional amounts for preparation time would not apply.

### ***Travel Costs***

Actual or estimated travel costs must be paid in advance of the travel. Travel costs for such activities as making home visits, attending the custody evaluation conference, and appearing

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for subpoenaed appearances include 60.0 cents per mile to and from the destination or airport, the actual cost of round trip airfare and rental car, and the actual cost of lodging.

The fee for travel time is \$100 per hour, to a maximum of \$500 per 24 hour period. Travel time includes business hours spent by Dr. King away from her office in order to arrive at and return from the location of the activity.

Travel costs for subpoenaed appearances will be the responsibility of the party issuing the subpoena.

### ***Costs for Review of Materials***

Review of some documents, such as those filed with the court, are included in the basic fee. There will be additional charges at the rate of \$165 per hour for reviewing a large number of documents resulting from protracted litigation and for journals, logs, audio recordings, emails, etc. presented by parties.

### ***Cancellations***

If you fail to cancel an appointment with Dr. King at least 48 hours in advance, you, personally and individually, will be billed for the time reserved for you at the rate of \$165 per hour. If Dr. King is subpoenaed to testify at a deposition or trial that is cancelled without advance notice to her of at least three business days, fees for preparation and for the planned appearance will be billed to the person who issued the subpoena.

### ***Written Report***

The cost for a written report will be billed at \$165 per hour to the party requesting the report. Time spent preparing the report may be 20+ hours.

### ***Requests for Records and Costs for Responding to Actions You Initiate***

When copies of Dr. King's records are subpoenaed, the cost will be the actual cost of copies plus a minimum of four hours at the rate of \$165 per hour for time spent by Dr. King overseeing the copying personally, i.e., a minimum of \$660 plus the actual cost of copies. If more than four hours is required this will be billed at \$165 per hour. Dr. King must oversee the copying personally to ensure that protected materials are not released. In addition, Dr. King may object to the release of certain records, such as notes from interviews with children, so these records must be read personally by Dr. King to determine if an objection is necessary. Dr. King will not agree to have all records copied for her without directly overseeing the reproduction, nor will she agree to produce records for the actual cost of copying alone. The party issuing the

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subpoena will be responsible for the cost. Your signature on this document certifies you understand and agree to the terms outlined in this paragraph and agree to pay the costs as outlined in this paragraph.

When Dr. King is asked, expected, required, or chooses to receive, read, and respond to subpoenas, motions or other pleadings, orders, or complaints whether formal or informal of which she is a subject and which are initiated by you or your attorney, you agree to pay for the time spent by Dr. King doing so. Examples include but are not limited to time spent by Dr. King keeping appointments to accommodate process servers, reading documents and reviewing associated records, preparing responses, appearing, time spent in travel and travel costs in order to respond or appear. All activity will be billed at \$165 per hour. If Dr. King chooses to retain an attorney to represent her in her response to actions initiated by you or your attorney, you agree to pay for this cost. Your signature on this document certifies you understand and agree to the terms outlined in this paragraph and agree to pay the costs as outlined in this paragraph.

### **Billing/Payment**

Itemized billing statements will be submitted to parties for additional costs as activity is planned or occurs. Payment is expected upon receipt of the statement. Work on the evaluation will cease any time there is a balance due on the account that is not paid within two weeks. If progress is hampered because one party has failed to pay his or her account, the other party may pay the delinquent amount, though it would be the payer's responsibility to take steps to seek reimbursement if desired.

If you prefer to receive billing statements through the U.S. Postal Service, you are asked to notify Dr. King of this preference in writing. Otherwise, billing statements will be sent to you using the email address you provided. You are responsible for notifying Dr. King promptly if there are any changes in your contact information, including your mailing address, phone number, and email address.

You may use a credit card to pay, though there will be a 3% charge added. There will be a \$35 charge or the amount allowed by law for returned checks or credit card charge-backs plus any institutional fees assessed. Balances not paid within 30 days of the date billed will be charged interest at a rate of 1.5% per month (18% per annum). Accounts overdue for 60 days may be submitted to a collection service, at which time the balance will be increased 35% to offset collection commissions. You agree to pay any additional fees assessed by the collection agency including attorneys' fees and court costs associated with collection activity.

SIGNATURE PAGE FOLLOWS THIS PAGE

Your initials \_\_\_\_\_

*SIGNATURE*

*Please place your initials at the bottom of each of the preceding five (5) pages of this document and submit all six (6) pages of this document to Dr. King. Your signature below certifies you agree to permit a copy of this authorization to be used in place of the original.*

*Your signature below certifies you have read and understood to your satisfaction the procedures, terms, conditions, and costs presented in this document. You have had an opportunity to review this document with an attorney and receive legal guidance. Your signature certifies you agree to all of the procedures, terms, conditions and costs presented in this document.*

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*Your printed name*

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*Your signature*

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*Date signed*

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